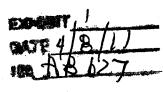
# Teen Abortion Risks Fact Sheet



"Parents are faced with a shell of a person and have no idea where they lost their child."

—Terri, who had a secret abortion as a teen

## Suicide attempts 6 times more likely

- Teenagers are 6 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last six months than are teens who have not had an abortion, and four times more likely to commit suicide than adults who abort. A history of abortion is likely to be associated with adolescent suicidal thinking. Overall, women who have abortions have a 6 times higher rate of suicide compared to women who carry to term.
- Teens who abort are more likely to develop psychological problems, 4 and are nearly three times more likely to be admitted to mental health hospitals than teens in general. 5
- **About 40% of teen abortions take place with no parental involvement**, 6 leaving parents in the dark about subsequent emotional or physical problems and putting them at risk for futher injury and death. 7
- Teens are 5 times more likely to seek subsequent help for psychological and emotional problems compared to their peers who carry "unwanted pregnancies" to term.8
- Teens are 3 times more likely to report subsequent trouble sleeping, and nine times more likely to report subsequent marijuana use after abortion.8
- Among studies comparing abortion vs. carrying to term, worse outcomes are associated with abortion, even when the pregnancy is unplanned.8
- Teens are more likely to abort because of pressure from their parents or partner. In one study, 64% of women who had undergone an abortion reported that they felt pressured by others to abort.
- Teens are more likely to report being misinformed in pre-abortion counseling.

### Acute Pain. Infertility. Risk of Death.

- Acute pain. Teens report more severe pain during the abortion procedure than do adult women. 12
- Lacerations up to twice as likely. Teens are up to twice as likely to experience dangerous cervical lacerations during abortion compared to older women.<sup>13</sup>
- Infertility and life-threatening complications. Studies have found that teens are at higher risk for post-abortion infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and endometritis. <sup>14</sup> These infections increase their risk of infertility, hysterectomy, ectopic pregnancy, and other serious complications. <sup>15</sup>
- **Higher breast cancer risk.** An early full-term birth reduces breast cancer risk by as much as 1/3, while abortion of a first pregnancy carries a 30- to 50% increased risk of breast cancer. More than 90% of those who abort at 17 or younger have not had a previous full-term pregnancy, compared to 78% of patients age 18-19 and 49% of abortion patients overall. To
- Teens are more likely to have riskier late-term abortions. According to the CDC, approximately 30% of abortions among teens take place at 13 weeks gestation or greater, compared to only 12% among women in general. Late-term abortions are associated with more severe psychological problems, higher risk of physical complications, and problems in later pregnancies.

#### Grief, trauma and self-destructive outcomes

• Teens who abort are twice as likely as their peers to abuse alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine. 22

continued ▶

- \* Teens have greater difficulty coping after abortion, 23 leading to problems such as suicide, psychological problems, substance abuse, and difficulty in relationships.
- Negative effects on relationships and parenting. Teens who report "being particularly fond of children" do not do as well
  psychologically after an abortion.<sup>24</sup> Teens who have abortions often have later problems regarding sexuality and parenting.<sup>25</sup>
- A lonely, traumatic experience. The abortion procedure itself is considered by many teems to be stressful and associated with feelings of guilt, depression, and a sense of isolation.<sup>26</sup>
- A nightmare that doesn't end. Teens are more likely to report severe nightmares and to score higher on scales measuring antisocial traits, paranoia, drug abuse, and psychotic delusions than are older abortion patients.<sup>27</sup>
- Four times higher risk of repeat abortion. Teens who abort are likely to become pregnant again within the next few years. 28 Among pregnant teens, those who had had an abortion were at least 4 times more likely to abort. 29

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